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News Release



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SERVICE TO CONSIDER WHETHER BROWN PELICAN SHOULD BE PROPOSED FOR DELISTING

The California brown pelican – a species known for dramatic plunging dives into the ocean– will be studied to determine whether it should be proposed for removal from protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today. The brown pelican (including brown pelicans in California) was listed as endangered in 1970. The California subspecies occurs along the Pacific Coast from the Gulf of California to Washington and into southern British Columbia.

The Service recently completed an initial 90-day review of a petition submitted in December 2005 by the Endangered Species Recovery Council, seeking to remove the California brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis californicus*) from the threatened and endangered species list under the ESA. The Service will now undertake a more comprehensive study—known as a 12-month status review—to determine whether or not to propose the brown pelican for delisting.

“The Service has found that the petition presents substantial scientific or commercial information indicating that removing the California brown pelican from the Endangered Species List may be warranted,” said Steve Thompson, director of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s California/Nevada Operations Office. “We are now beginning a more thorough review to determine if the petitioned action is warranted,” Thompson said. “To ensure that the review is as comprehensive as possible, we are actively soliciting information and data regarding this subspecies.”

In 1985, brown pelicans on the Atlantic Coast and in Florida and Alabama were removed from the Endangered Species List. The Service will review the status of all brown pelicans currently protected under the ESA, which includes brown pelicans in Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, the Pacific Coast, Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America, in a process known as a 5-year review. The ESA requires the Service to review the status of listed species at least once every five years to determine whether its status has changed such that it should be delisted or classified differently.

At the conclusion of the five-year review, the Service may find that the whole species or discrete populations no longer need the protection of the ESA and may propose reclassification of the species or distinct population segments.

To ensure that the status review of the brown pelican is as thorough as possible, the Service is soliciting new information about the pelican from the public, concerned governmental agencies, Tribes, the scientific community, industry, environmental entities, and any other interested parties. Information for the status review and five-year review can be addressed to Christine Hamilton, 2493 Portola Road, Suite B; Ventura, CA 93003 and sent to: fws8pelicanpetition@fws.gov. The comment period will close July 24, 2006.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 63 fishery resource offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces Federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Aid program that distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to State fish and wildlife agencies.